



## Media Release

13 October 2011

### Promoting Positive Mental Health for Older Tasmanians

This week is Mental Health Week, and the Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) continues to raise the profile of mental health and wellbeing for all Tasmanians.

Last Friday, the MHCT joined forces with the Council of the Ageing (COTA) (Tasmania) to facilitate a workshop for more than seventy participants promoting positive mental health for older Tasmanians. The workshop was held at the Glenorchy Civic Centre.

The MHCT CEO Michelle Swallow said 'A number of people shared their experiences of mental illness or of caring for someone with a mental illness, including four COTA champions. A key feature of the workshop was a session which generated positive strategies to stay connected with our community while living on a limited budget'.

'Many suggestions included attending social activities that help older Tasmanians stay connected. These were: Men's Sheds; gardening and sewing clubs; walking, swimming and other exercise groups; art and craft and other creative groups; spending time socialising with friends and family; prayer and meditation; volunteering and visiting people'.

'Typical barriers to staying connected included: being unable to access transport; lack of money to participate; ill health; stigma associated with mental illness; fear of falling; and having no one to go with", Ms Swallow said.

Older Tasmanians identified what SANE Australia research confirms, that staying connected to their local communities helped them to maintain positive mental health and wellbeing. Getting involved in regular physical activity also promotes positive mental health in older Tasmanians.

Ms Swallow stated that 'When people look after their physical health there is a positive flow-on effect to their mental health. People are fitter, more relaxed and better able to cope with day to day life'.

**For further information and to arrange an interview, contact:**

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